We claim:

1. A method for authenticating a user, comprising:

obtaining an asserted identity of said user;

presenting one or more questions to said user that said user has previously answered; and

processing spoken answers to said one or more questions using an automatic speech recognition technique.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing step is performed until a predefined security threshold is satisfied.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said predefined security threshold is based on a sum of security weights of correctly answered questions.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of processing said answer using an utterance verification technique.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing step further comprises the step of converting said spoken answers to a textual form and comparing said textual form to answers obtained during an enrollment phase.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing step further comprises the step of obtaining a confidence score for a recognized version of said spoken answer.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing step further comprises the step of employing word spotting techniques to determine if said spoken answer matches an answer obtained during an enrollment phase.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said authentication is performed in connection with the resetting of a password of said user.

9. An apparatus for authenticating a user, comprising:

a memory; and

at least one processor, coupled to the memory, operative to:

obtain an asserted identity of said user;

present one or more questions to said user that said user has previously answered; and

process spoken answers to said one or more questions using an automatic speech recognition technique.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said processor is further configured to process said spoken answers until a predefined security threshold is satisfied.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said predefined security threshold is based on a sum of security weights of correctly answered questions.

12. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said processor is further configured to process said answer using an utterance verification technique.

13. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said processor is further configured to convert said spoken answers to a textual form and comparing said textual form to answers obtained during an enrollment phase.

14. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said processor is further configured to obtain a confidence score for a recognized version of said spoken answer.

15. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said processor is further configured to employ word spotting techniques to determine if said spoken answer matches an answer obtained during an enrollment phase.

16. An article of manufacture for authenticating a user, comprising a machine readable medium containing one or more programs which when executed implement the steps of:

obtaining an asserted identity of said user;

presenting one or more questions to said user that said user has previously answered; and

processing spoken answers to said one or more questions using an automatic speech recognition technique.

17. The article of manufacture of claim 16, further comprising the step of processing said answer using an utterance verification technique.

18. The article of manufacture of claim 16, wherein said processing step further comprises the step of converting said spoken answers to a textual form and comparing said textual form to answers obtained during an enrollment phase.

19. The article of manufacture of claim 16, wherein said processing step further comprises the step of obtaining a confidence score for a recognized version of said spoken answer.

20. The article of manufacture of claim 16, wherein said processing step further comprises the step of employing word spotting techniques to determine if said spoken answer matches an answer obtained during an enrollment phase.